



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Prospective Sport and Exercise Psychology Graduate Students

The information in this FAQ for the sport and exercise psychology (Master of Science/Master of Education) programs at Springfield College is designed to supplement the information provided on the [Springfield College website](#). Prospective graduate students should review the website and the FAQ below for detailed information about the programs.

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS

#### When are applications due?

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. However, we recommend applying no later than March 15.

#### Do you only accept students for fall admission?

Yes, students are accepted for the fall semester only.

#### How many students are accepted into the master's degree cohort each year?

Approximately 40 students apply to the master's program, and about 16 are accepted.

#### Do you require GRE scores to apply?

No, GRE scores are not required to apply.

#### From whom should I get letters of recommendation? What does a good letter of recommendation look like? Where should my recommenders send their letter?

Letters of recommendation should be written by someone who is in a position to comment on the likelihood of your success in the program. You should submit at least two letters written by faculty members. Personal or character references are generally not as helpful as academic references.

Letters of recommendation should be submitted by the recommender (not by the applicant) to [graduate@springfield.edu](mailto:graduate@springfield.edu).

#### I have degree(s) in \_\_\_\_\_. Is there still a chance I could get accepted?

Yes, admitted students have a variety of bachelor's degrees. Most commonly, our students come from majors such as exercise science/kinesiology, psychology, and athletic training, but all majors are considered.

#### I haven't taken the program prerequisites. Is there still a chance I could get accepted? What courses do you recommend I take to prepare for the program?

The following courses in exercise science are required prerequisites:

- Anatomy & Physiology with lab
- Exercise Physiology

Ideally, these courses are taken prior to beginning the program, but students may also take them during their first year at Springfield College. Courses in sport psychology, exercise or performance psychology, and research methods and/or statistics are also useful for this program (but not required).

### **What is the cost of tuition?**

Currently [graduate tuition](#) is \$1,138 per credit hour. Most classes are 3 credit hours. Full-time students take 9 credit hours per semester.

### **What funding opportunities are available?**

There are a number of Graduate Fellowships and Graduate Associateships available. Fellowship positions include teaching, research, and/or coaching responsibilities while Associateships include administrative and/or professional services positions. Workload does not exceed 20 hours per week. Compensation can include a tuition waiver and stipend and/or hourly pay. These positions are competitive and not every student who applies for a position or funding can be accommodated. There are also a limited number of scholarships and awards available to graduate students. Please see the [graduate admissions Web page](#) for current opportunities.

### **On average, how long does it take to complete the master's program?**

The Master of Science/Master of Education programs usually take two years (four semesters) of full-time study.

### **In addition to coursework, what else do I need to do to earn my Master of Science/Master of Education?**

For the Master of Science degree, students are required to complete and defend a master's thesis.

For the Master of Education degree, students are required to complete an applied portfolio and oral examination.

### **Which track is the best option for me, the Master of Science or Master of Education?**

The Master of Science track is recommended for students who are interested in conducting research and investigating a specific sport/exercise psychology topic area in depth. The Master of Science track is also strongly recommended for students who plan to go on to pursue a PhD. The Master of Science track demonstrates to prospective schools/employers that you have strong writing and analytical skills.

The Master of Education track is recommended for those interested in working closely with performers by integrating science to practice. The Master of Education track demonstrates to future employers that you have a thoughtful approach to your work and experience implementing it.

### **Is sport and exercise psychology different from athletic counseling?**

These may seem like similar programs, but they have defined differences in terms of coursework, theoretical orientation, and how those in the programs would work with athletes. Sport and exercise psychology places more emphasis on performance enhancement and working specifically in a sport or exercise setting. [Learn more about the differences.](#)

### **If I have questions about my application, who do I contact?**

The Office of Graduate Admissions staff processes the applications for the master's degree in sport and exercise psychology. If you have questions about the application, they can be reached at [graduate@springfield.edu](mailto:graduate@springfield.edu) or (413) 748-3225.

Questions that are specific to the program and curriculum can be directed to Rachel Ahlmeyer, graduate recruiter and admissions coordinator at [rahlmeyer@springfield.edu](mailto:rahlmeyer@springfield.edu) or Jasmin Hutchinson, PhD, program director for sport and exercise psychology, at [jhutchinson@springfield.edu](mailto:jhutchinson@springfield.edu).

## **APPLIED SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY EXPERIENCES**

### **Are there opportunities for students to work with athletes and other performers?**

Yes, many of our students provide mental performance enhancement services to individual athletes and teams and other performers during their time as a student in our program. We typically have placements with Springfield College athletic teams and with other institutions in the surrounding area where students primarily work with college-age and/or high school-age individuals. However, our list of sites continues to expand each year as interest grows.

### **When can I begin working with athletes and other performers providing sport and exercise psychology services?**

We view it as essential for students in our program to complete specific foundational courses and shadowing experiences prior to serving as the primary consultant with a team or group of individuals. Students must take Sport Psychology, Exercise Psychology, and Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology courses before providing mental performance services. These courses are taken in the first year of the master's program. Students complete the shadowing experience in the spring of their first year and are able to serve as the primary graduate mental performance consultant (GMPC) in their second year in the program.

### **What is the shadowing experience like and why is it important to do this?**

Students participate in a semester of shadowing where they observe GMPCs (more senior students in the program doing applied work). Shadowing is where a novice practitioner has the opportunity to observe a more senior graduate student provide applied services and allows them to gain insight into applied sport and exercise psychology early in their graduate academic career. The shadowing experience helps students develop a broader peer support network and expand their professional network as well as feel more prepared to successfully serve as a primary consultant for a program.

### **Will this program prepare me to be a mental health practitioner?**

No. We are not a clinical program so we do not prepare students to provide mental health or counseling services. We utilize an educational approach to practice and focus on utilizing specific mental skills and strategies to enhance performance. However, our students can go on to become licensed sports psychologists or mental health practitioners. For example, Springfield College offers a [PsyD program](#) and a [clinical mental health counseling](#) program.

### **Will this program prepare me for Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) certification as a certified mental performance consultant (CMPC)?**

Students can complete all required coursework for [CMPC](#) eligibility during their time at Springfield College. Students will also be able to start to accumulate hours towards mentored experience hours for the AASP requirement. It can be difficult to accumulate the required 400 hours by graduation, but several students have been able to achieve this by enrolling in a summer internship between their first and second year in the program.

## **CAREERS AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **What can I do with a master's degree in sport and exercise psychology?**

A sports psychology degree can lead to a number of career options. Sport and performance psychology professionals work with people at every age and across a variety of performance contexts. This can be in sports working with athletes and coaches, but also in exercise settings, or with tactical populations (e.g., military, firefighters, police), business executives, and performing artists. The primary goal of professionals in the field is to facilitate optimal involvement, performance, and enjoyment of individuals and teams. This is accomplished by teaching mental skills, such as goal setting, imagery, relaxation, and self-talk.

A graduate degree in sports psychology is also very valuable for people who work with others in related fields, such as coaching, athletic training, personal training, or clinical exercise physiology.

### **What are examples of careers of students who complete the sport and exercise psychology program at Springfield College?**

Our recent graduates currently have careers in private practice, coaching, athletic training, and the armed forces. A large number of our graduates also continue on to doctoral programs.

### **Are there opportunities for students to network/attend and present at professional conferences?**

Yes, our students are very active in the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP). Several of our students and faculty travel to and present at the AASP annual conference each year. Springfield College has also organized and hosted the AASP Northeast Regional Conference for several years in a row.

Other conferences and organizations that our students are involved with include the [North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity](#) and the American Psychological Association [Division 47](#). Several of our students are also involved in student interest groups/leadership roles within each of these organizations.

### **How can I stay connected with the Sport and Exercise Psychology program at Springfield College?**

Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)!

## **VISITING CAMPUS AND GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE**

### **Can I visit Springfield College prior to applying or after being accepted?**

Our open house events and events for accepted students will be held virtually for now, but campus tours are available. Students are encouraged to reach out to the Office of Graduate Admissions staff about coordinating a campus visit. Springfield College has also hosted the Northeast Regional AASP Conference for several consecutive years (usually in March). This is a great opportunity to network, meet current faculty/students, attend keynote lectures from experts in the field, and hear what kinds of research our current students are involved in.

### **What is a typical day in the life of a master's student at Springfield College like?**

Our students are busy and involved in a variety of experiences here on campus! Our graduate students are enrolled full-time (three courses at 3 credit hours each). Many of our students also have Fellowships and Associateships. In addition to attending class, our students are involved in a variety of experiences, including applied work with athletic teams and individual athletes on campus and campuses nearby. Additionally, some of our students are involved in gaining research experience either leading their own projects and/or being part of a faculty member's research team.

If you have specific questions, please reach out to [Jasmin Hutchinson](#), who can put you in touch with a current master's or doctoral student who would be happy to answer any questions you have about day-to-day experiences as a graduate student.

### **Will my experience in graduate school be similar to my experience as an undergraduate student?**

In some ways, being a graduate student and undergraduate student are similar (moving to a new state/country, making new friends, getting involved in organizations/leadership roles on campus). In other ways, graduate school is very different from undergraduate school.

In graduate school, many of the students live off campus although graduate student specific [housing](#) on campus is also available. Graduate school coursework is more specific and specialized than many undergraduate courses. Similar to an undergraduate program of study, many of our graduate level courses meet two or three times per week during traditional "business hours." Other courses meet once a week for about two and a half hours and may be offered in the evenings.